



Public Safety Policy Principles
Reforms related to conditions that negatively impact community safety
and law enforcement public safety efforts
Adopted March 24, 2024

The Los Angeles County Division's Board of Directors, building on the Division's 2024 Strategic Priority to "Support legislation, policies, funding and other resources that would improve public safety and address law enforcement challenges," is considering the adoption of policy principles related to conditions that negatively impact community safety and law enforcement public safety efforts, including:

Law Enforcement Tools One of the most important and significant missions of local government is to provide a safe community for their residents. To accomplish this mission, cities either maintain their own police departments to preserve public safety or contract with another law enforcement agency, usually the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, to perform this function. However, for law enforcement to effectively maintain public safety, they need all the appropriate investigative and other tools that are legally available pursuant to federal constitutional laws.

Balancing Officer Safety with Protecting the Public The imposition of non-constitutionally required legal and policy restrictions that unduly restrict law enforcement in the detection, apprehension and prosecution of those who commit crimes, seriously hinders law enforcement's ability to keep their communities safe. These law enforcement restrictions can embolden criminals to commit more serious crimes, leading to an even greater negative impact on community safety. Our laws need to provide law enforcement with the tools they need, while striking the appropriate balance between the rights of those accused of committing crimes and the rights of police and prosecutors to hold perpetrators accountable so that community safety is enhanced.

Both police and their community members have become increasingly frustrated with the escalation of crimes and with the seeming inability of our laws to provide sufficient accountability and deterrence for those who commit these crimes, particularly for repeat offenders. At a time when police are exposed to increased danger from emboldened criminals, there have been legal proposals that would limit the resources of police agencies and heighten the risks of police work. Such proposals have included those that would effectively restrict officers' abilities to defend themselves even when their lives are in danger. As a result,

cities have faced serious attrition in their police agencies and difficulty filling these vacancies. Such attrition creates additional strain and dangers to the remaining officers who are trying to protect their communities with fewer personnel and resources.

Recruiting and Retaining Law Enforcement Personnel Clearly, law enforcement officers and others in the criminal justice system need to perform their duties in a lawful and ethical manner or else face appropriate legal and other sanctions for such violations. The occurrence of such violations, however, should not cause law-abiding officers to be burdened with unnecessary restrictions that hinder their ability to effectively perform their duties in protecting the public they serve. As mentioned previously, our laws need to be properly balanced. In addition, our cities need laws and other resources that will enable their police agencies to attract and retain qualified, dedicated law enforcement officers so that our communities may be well protected. Such laws should not unnecessarily increase the inherently high risks involved in police work. Nor should these laws unnecessarily increase the already significant barriers to detect, apprehend and successfully prosecute those who commit crimes in our communities. Community safety requires police agencies who have sufficient tools and resources to ethically perform their duties well. It also requires a legal system that holds law breakers accountable for their crimes while providing appropriate services to those who have underlying issues that contribute to their criminality.